

Grass Watch Report



Over the last number of years, we have partnered with Trouw Nutrition Ireland as a participant in the Grass Watch programme. We have a specific Brett's Monitor Farm supplying a weekly grass sample, grassland management data and milk performance. This information is fed into a database with 14 other dairy farms in the Republic of Ireland and the aim is to create useful reports. If you would like to receive this Grass Watch report on a regular basis, please email grasswatch@brettbrothers.ie

Grass Watch results show the average of all the farms participating in the programme. This year, the level of grass protein is significantly higher than 2018. Some farmers are reporting massive variations in milk urea levels and this can be linked to the bouts of dry weather and isolated rainfall in some areas. Moisture is required to get the nitrogen up into the growing plant. Using the Grass Watch results we can accurately predict the milk yield that will be supported by various grass dry matter intakes and then this allows us to give clear feeding guidelines depending on expected milk yield.

Table 1: Grass Watch Results Week 22 (27th May)

Grass Quality	Brett's Monitor Farm	Minimum	Overall Average	Maximum
Dry Matter (%)	15.1	15.1	17.7	22.5
Est ME (MJ/kg DM)	12.3	11.8	12.3	12.7
Crude Protein (%)	23.8	15.2	20.9	27.6
NDF (%)	36	33	37	42
Oil A (%)	4.3	3.8	4.3	5.3
Sugars (%)	10.2	9	11.2	13.5

Table 2: Based on the grass results we can predict the amount of compound feed required to support various milk yields depending on actual grass dry matter intake.

Litres	Compound Required kg/DMI					
	8kg DMI	10kg DMI	12kg DMI	14kg DMI	15kg DMI	16kg DMI
20	7.6	5.4	3.1	0.8	0.0	0.0
22	8.6	6.4	4.1	1.8	0.7	0.0
24	9.6	7.3	5.1	2.8	1.6	0.5
26	10.6	8.3	6.0	3.8	2.6	1.5
28	11.6	9.3	7.0	4.7	3.6	2.5
30	12.6	10.3	8.0	5.7	4.6	3.4

Maintaining Grass Quality During The Mid-Season

Continuous dry weather dominated much of May, along with steady, drying winds. As a result, there was a significant soil moisture deficit on many farms that led to inconsistent grass growth across the region and an overall reduction in grass quality. During periods of soil moisture deficit, grass struggles to absorb enough Nitrogen and Phosphorus to maintain peak growth during the mid-season. Grass becomes pale green / yellow following a reduction in Nitrogen availability the protein content drops. The result of this in many cases is a reduction in both milk yield and milk protein and urea concentration. Recent rainfall will restore soil moisture and it is expected that grass growth will benefit greatly. To compensate this, get cows into lower covers if grass growth permits or graze lower, more lush covers during the day and stronger poorer quality covers at night. Increasing concentrate feeding rate can make up for the energy loss of poor-quality grass and helps to maintain peak milk production (see table 2). Where growth is good, maintain cows on an 18 to 21 day rotation with pre-grazing covers no stronger than 1600 kg DM/ha. Topping, pre-mowing and baling will all help towards improving the quality of swards on the subsequent grazing.

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A Guide To Assess Grass Covers

Continuation from previous page

As a guide, if you grab grass from the base of the sward by your hand it equates roughly to 500kg DM/ha the next hand on top of the first is another 500 and the next hand will leave you with a total of 1500 kg DM/ha. Do not graze covers with over 4 fists of grass (greater than 2000kg DM/ha).



Beef Grass Finisher Cubes

Beef Grass Finisher Cubes are high in energy with barley being included at high levels. This feed also includes soya hulls and is the ideal complement to grazed grass at a feed rate of 3-5 kgs per head per day. With protein at 12%, this is the ideal feed for heifers or bullocks that will be finished off grass this summer. Ask your Bretts Sales Representative for further information.

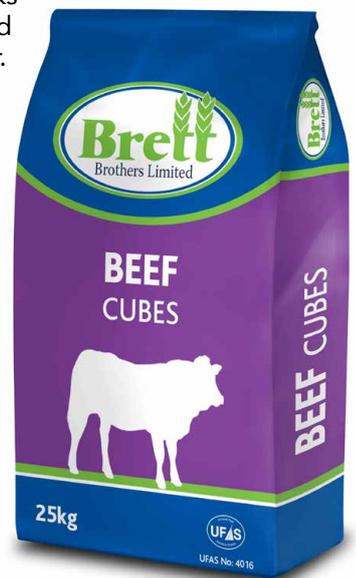


Table 3:
Target Weights
for Heifer Rearing

Age	Target % Mature Liveweight	Target Weight (kgs)
9 Months (Puberty)	40	240
15 Months (Breeding)	60	360
24 Months (Calving)	90	540

PRODUCT FOCUS

Heifer Rearer Cubes

Brett Heifer Rearer Cubes are designed with the sole purpose of growing replacement heifers to achieve target weights at critical stages (see table 3). This ensures that as an in-calf heifer calving down, she is at optimum size before entering the main herd, improving her longevity in the herd. Research has shown that high protein feeds promote good mammary development and prevents fatty tissue depositing in the udder, thus maximising future milking ability. High levels of calcium and phosphorus encourage bone growth and development, helping the foundation frame of the future cow and encouraging the onset of puberty and reproductive cycling. Heifer Rearer Cubes are suitable for weaned calves from 12 weeks of age and can be fed until 6 weeks before calving down as a 2-year-old. They are available in Bulk and 25 kg Bags.

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Callan, Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 056 7755300

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Windgap, Co. Kilkenny
Tel: 051 648204

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Ardfinnan, Co. Tipperary
Tel: 052 7466208

Brett Brothers Ltd.,
Portlawn, Co. Waterford
Tel: 051 387396